

PETITION.

To the General Assembly of Maryland:

The Board of Managers of the House of Refuge for Juvenile delinquents, respectfully ask leave to present to your honorable body that, by the Act, Ch. 288, passed March 8th, 1856, the annual sum of ten thousand dollars, for the term of five years, was appropriated "for the aid, benefit and support" of said Institution. This sum was less than was asked for, and was known to be necessary for the purpose, but the board accepted the donation gratefully.

After many and painful struggles, the Board succeeded in being able to open the house for the reception of inmates, December, 1855. All this was effected without receiving one cent from the State treasury, although the Refuge is emphatically a State Institution, represented in its Board of Managers, by appointees of the State. Children from every county, by law, being made receivable, an annual report of their condition, to your honorable body, being required, and its object being essentially one in which the whole commonwealth is most deeply interested, and upon the soundest principles of public economy. The former reports of the Board, have presented this point to the attention of the Legislature more largely than it is now intended to do, but it may be briefly said, that the delinquents placed by statute under our guardianship, are members of the State. As minors, it is true, that they are not yet entitled to the privileges of the adult, but they are nevertheless a part of its citizenship, and have a claim upon the care of the State; it is on this plea that we ask for them the protection and support of the public authorities, and then, when by a practical recognition of this plea, these delinquents are placed under proper restraints, and by secular and moral instruction and employment and discipline, and thus reclaimed from their habits of vice and crime—the State receives the benefit, inasmuch as society is made more secure in its peace and property, while, at the same time, the supply of the jail and penitentiary, is cut off at the very fountain head, and thus the cost to the State as a mere matter of dollars and cents, is lessened to a degree that few appreciate.